

## GARMENT DRYING RACK

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### I. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a rack for drying garments.

#### 5 II. DESCRIPTION OF RELATED ART

It is well known that delicate clothing items are oftentimes damaged if dried by a conventional clothes dryer after washing. For that reason, many people prefer to air dry such delicate items after washing in order to protect the delicate garments from damage.

10 In order to air dry such delicate garments, such garments are typically hung over a clothesline. This method of air drying the garments, however, presents its own set of difficulties.

More specifically, due to inclement or cold weather, it may be necessary to mount the clothesline inside the dwelling or other building in order to dry the garments. However, in many such dwellings or other buildings, there is simply  
15 insufficient room within the laundry facilities to mount such a clothesline.

In addition, since many laundry facilities are relatively small, even if a clothesline can be mounted or strung within the facility, the amount of clothesline available to actually hang the delicate garments is necessarily limited. When this  
20 occurs, the person doing the laundry oftentimes dries the garments in stages which necessarily prolongs the overall laundry and drying process.

## SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention provides a garment drying rack which overcomes all of the above-mentioned disadvantages of the prior art.

5 In brief, the garment drying rack comprises a hub which is preferably cylindrical in shape. At least three elongated legs are pivotally mounted at their inner end to the hub so that the legs are pivotal between an operable position and a storage position. In their operable position, the legs extend outwardly from the hub so that garments to be dried may be positioned over the legs. Conversely, in their storage position, the legs extend axially outwardly from the hub and are generally parallel and  
10 adjacent to each other.

An actuator is preferably movably mounted in the hub between a first and a second position. A gear rack on the outer periphery of the actuator cooperates with a ratchet formed at the inner end of each leg. Thus, as the actuator is moved from its first and to its second position, the coaction between the actuator gear rack and the  
15 ratchets formed at the inner ends of the legs pivotally moves the legs in unison with each other from the storage position and to the operable position.

An elongated support is associated with each leg. Each support has one end pivotally secured to an outer end of its associated leg so that the supports are each pivotal between an open position and a collapsed position. In their open position, the  
20 supports extend outwardly from their associated legs. Conversely, in their collapsed position, the supports are nested within their associated legs.

A recess is formed at the outer end of each leg. This recess is dimensioned to receive a free end of one support. Consequently, by moving the supports to their open position a plurality of hubs, each having three or more legs, may be stacked one upon the other. In doing so, the garment drying rack includes two or more tiers for  
5 supporting garments to be dried.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

A better understanding of the present invention will be had upon reference to the following detailed description, when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing, wherein like reference characters refer to like parts throughout the several  
10 views, and in which:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view illustrating a preferred embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side diagrammatic view illustrating the preferred embodiment of the present invention;

15 FIG. 3 is a side view illustrating a preferred embodiment of the invention on a support surface;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 3, but illustrating a pair of drying racks stacked upon each other;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary longitudinal sectional view illustrating an outer end of  
20 one leg and with a support in its collapsed position;

FIG. 6 is a view similar to FIG. 5, but illustrating the support in its open position;

FIG. 7 is a fragmentary partial sectional view of the hub of the present invention;

5           FIG. 7A is a view similar to FIG. 7; and

FIG. 8 is a fragmentary elevational view illustrating a portion of the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

10           With reference first to FIG. 1, a preferred embodiment of a garment drying rack 10 of the present invention is shown. The rack 10 includes a generally cylindrical hub 12 having at least three, and preferably four, elongated legs 14. The legs 14 are each pivotally mounted at an inner end 16 to the hub 12 so that the legs are pivotal between an operable position, illustrated in solid line in FIG. 2, and a  
15           storage position, illustrated in phantom line in FIG. 2.

          With reference now particularly to FIG. 7, an actuator 20 is axially movably mounted to the hub 12 between a first position, illustrated in FIG. 7A, and a second position, illustrated in FIG. 7. The hub 20 includes a gear rack 22 formed around its outer periphery. This gear rack 22 meshingly engages with a ratchet 24 formed at the  
20           inner end of each leg 14. Consequently, as the actuator 20 is moved from its first

position (FIG. 7A) and to its second position (FIG. 7), the actuator 20 pivots the legs 14 from their storage position and to their operable position in unison with each other.

Referring now particularly to FIG. 7, an elongated strut 26 is pivotally secured at one end 28 to each leg 14 and pivotally secured at its opposite end 30 to the actuator 20. These struts 26 not only support the legs 14 when the legs 14 are in their operable position, but also serve to lock the legs 14 against an unintended collapse of the legs 14 to their storage position.

As best shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, a hook 32 is preferably mounted to the top of the hub 12. The hook 32 enables the drying rack 10 to be suspended if desired.

With reference now particularly to FIGS. 5 and 6, an elongated support 40 is associated with each leg 14. One end 42 of each support 40 is pivotally mounted to its associated leg 14 adjacent an outer end 44 of the leg 14.

Each support 40 is pivotal between a collapsed position, illustrated in FIG. 5, and an open position, illustrated in FIG. 6. In its collapsed position, the support 40 is partially nested within its associated leg 14. Conversely, in its open position, the support 40 extends outwardly and downwardly from its associated leg 14. A stop 46 formed on the leg 14 abuts against the support 40 when in its open position and limits the outward pivotal position of the strut 40 relative to its leg 14.

With reference now to FIGS. 6 and 8, a recess 50 is formed in the upper surface of each leg 14 adjacent its outer end 44. Each recess 50 is dimensioned to receive a free end 52 (FIG. 5) of one support 40 as best shown in FIG. 8.

Consequently, with the supports 40 positioned within the recesses 50 in a lower drying rack having a hub and at least three legs 14, the drying racks 10 can be stacked one upon the other as best shown in FIG. 4. Furthermore, although only two racks are illustrated in FIG. 4 as being stacked one upon the other, it will be understood that  
5 three or even more racks 10 may be stacked one upon the other as desired.

With reference now to FIGS. 6 and 3, a foot 60, preferably constructed of a resilient material, is mounted to each leg 14 adjacent its outer end 44 so that the foot 50 protrudes outwardly from a bottom of the leg 14. These feet 50 enable the drying rack 10 to be supported on a planar support surface 52 as best shown in FIG. 3. In  
10 doing so, the resilient feet 50 protect the surface 52 from damage from the drying rack 10.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that the present invention provides a simple and yet highly effective drying rack for drying garments after laundering. The drying rack 10 is not only easily movable between a collapsed position for easy storage and  
15 an open position for use, but may also be stacked one upon the other when multiple drying tiers are required.

Having described my invention, however, many modifications thereto will become apparent to those skilled in the art to which it pertains without deviation from the spirit of the invention as defined by the scope of the appended claims.

20 I claim: